

In the Claims:

1 1. (currently amended) A process for the fabrication of  
2 isolation structures with the following process steps

- 3 • provision of a semiconductor substrate (11),
- 4 • forming of at least two trenches (12) spaced from each  
5 other in the semiconductor substrate (11) with at  
6 least one rib (13) positioned between the trenches  
7 (12),
- 8 • conversion of the substrate material in the area of  
9 the trenches (12) into an electrically insulating  
10 material (14) up to the complete conversion of the rib  
11 or the ribs (13) arranged between them,
- 12 • forming of a functional structure (15) within the  
13 substrate material which is mechanically connected  
14 with the substrate exclusively by means of the  
15 converted substrate material which is formed at the  
16 trenches.

1 2. (currently amended) A process according to ~~patent~~ claim 1,  
2 ~~characterised~~ characterized in that silicon is used as  
3 semiconductor substrate.

1 3. (currently amended) A process according to ~~patent~~ claim 2,  
2 ~~characterised~~ characterized in that the substrate material  
3 is converted by means of thermal oxidation.

4 **Claims 4, 5, 6 (canceled).**

1     7.     (new) A process according to claim 1, characterized in that  
2           a continuous insulating oxide structure (14) over longer  
3           distances is created by means of a continuous arrangement  
4           of trenches (12) and ribs (13) between them.

1     8.     (new) A process according to claim 1, characterized in that  
2           with greater widths of the ribs (13), the process step of  
3           conversion is a multi-step process.

1     9.     (new) A process according to claim 8, characterized in that  
2           after a first process step of the conversion, the so  
3           created converted material is removed and thereafter the  
4           remaining material is converted in a second process step of  
5           the conversion.

**[REMARKS FOLLOW ON NEXT PAGE]**